

Grace Lutheran Church of Glen Ellyn

493 Forest Avenue at Pennsylvania
Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137
www.graceglenellyn.org
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West Conference - Metropolitan Chicago Synod - ELCA

MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2020
1085420-09

Grace To You is the monthly newsletter of Grace Lutheran Church of Glen Ellyn.

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Permit #104



FROM THE PASTOR

Is there going to be a “new normal” for church?

Obviously, no one knows for sure. We don't know what the next month will bring, much less the next few years.

But I find it helpful (and comforting) to ask myself, “What is Jesus hoping for here?”

This time of turmoil presents us with an amazing opportunity to rethink ourselves. And yes, the Church as an institution has been wrestling with that for decades, as financial resources get directed elsewhere and congregations close and seminaries struggle. But the ecclesiology has really hit the fan now, forcing the question that so many of us would really rather avoid. Maybe we should remember that there is SO MUCH POTENTIAL in our current situation, it would really be a shame to waste this opportunity for transformation. After all, our God is still the God of the Living, and isn't going anywhere, pandemic or no.

So if we think the Church is going to undergo transformation, what would you like it to look like?

Here's my list:

- Less energy poured into worrying about money. When I think back on how many hours in my 30+ years of ministry have been spent talking (wrangling/fuming/stressing) about money, compared to the hours spent in joyful anticipation of and planning for ministry/service/witness—well, it's a tad deflating. (If this is going to happen, it will require a new way of thinking about Church. At least, a way that is new to us.)
- Less judgement but more accountability. Wait, can you actually have both? Well, yes. Communities can choose to create accountability among members who expect honesty from one another, but who also lean on and show

grace. (I always think of a dear friend who is in an accountability group for pornography addiction in their church. They are *expected* to show up, to be honest, to grow, and to support the others. The more accountability and honesty, the more love and courage they experience.) Some of our small groups are excellent at this. But what if it was the culture of the entire congregation during worship and everything else?

- More biblical literacy. Sorry, maybe this one is purely selfish. But it's a fact that only a small percentage of Christians in mainline denominations actually read scripture regularly, much less go to the trouble of learning the history, context and theology of their faith. Which makes preaching difficult, honestly, because preachers have to both stimulate the thinking and faith of those well-versed in the bible while also trying help the rest who have no idea what the text is about catch up. Believe it or not, in seminary we were taught *not* to teach the scripture, but to proclaim the Good News, during the sermon. But it's really, really hard to do the latter well when people don't know the bible.
- Clear sense of purpose for our presence in our community—beyond “getting more people to join our Church.” Yes, I'm still excited for our possibilities on this one. Becoming a community that supports the faith, well-being, and joy of people as they age, and helping people stay connected in a time that too often brings isolation, is a pretty great way to communicate the love of Jesus for people around us.

You've probably heard all of this before—it's nothing new. But again, this present crisis is also a moment of opportunity for the Church. We are going to have to change. This is such a wonderful time to think about what we would love to become, and remember what we have to hold on to.

Pandemic or no, we are never going to lose what matters most. Thanks be to God.

Pastor Theobald

GRACE TO YOU

Proclaim, Build, and Serve



WHAT IS HOUSE CHURCH?

Congregations all over the world have been struggling to find good ways to uphold a worshipping community during the pandemic. We had hoped that the interruption to our worship life was only going to be a matter of weeks. Then maybe a couple of months. In March, when we first realized we would be out of church for two weeks, we never envisioned that we would still be out almost half a year later, with no clear vision of our future in sight.

That's why we've developed *House Church*—a small-group worship experience modeled on the House Church of the early Christian community. *House Church* offers the advantages of online worship that everyone can access (as long as they have either a phone or computer/tablet/smartphone), but controls the problems created when you get 50 people on a Zoom call. (It also eliminates the need for that tech team that can record and edit an entire service.)

House Church is hosted by a lay leader who sends an invitation to the others in that leader's "congregation." The invitation is either a link to access the gathering by computer, or a phone number with a code to join the group. (Our seniors who use this have said it's working well for them.) The lay leader runs the service, assigns parts to different people who want to read a lesson or a prayer, brings up the sermon and music at the appropriate time, mutes mics when it's necessary, and generally guides the liturgy.

Continued in Next Column

Are there still some challenges? Yes. But here's what I especially like about *House Church*:

- Technical glitches are more manageable without disrupting the whole thing. The group can identify and work out any issues and still worship together.
- With these smaller groups people actually have a chance to talk with each other. If you are on the computer, you can scroll across the thumbnails and see one another. There's the comfort of familiarity in seeing your friends, but also the discipline of accountability for showing up. (Not a bad thing—relationships of accountability make congregations strong.) The same group will worship together for a number of weeks, then we can switch it up.
- While I (along with my bishops) hesitated about doing communion online because there was so much less sense of community/accountability in watching a service online, I am more comfortable with offering communion in this experience. So I will be working on developing that liturgy and adding it to the *House Church* experience.
- We can connect our homebound members to an active community worship experience. Again, the smaller size of the group makes it less overwhelming and more meaningful—and those who have signed in have loved it.

Some of you still may think this isn't for you. That's ok—but I'd still encourage you to try it before you make a final decision. You wouldn't be the first to be surprised by how meaningful and enjoyable worshipping together in this way can be. Contact Becky Ficarella if you're interested in joining a *House Church* congregation. We hope to worship with you soon!

SUNDAY MORNING HOUSE CHURCH IS UP AND RUNNING!

Have you joined a House Church Pod Group yet? It is such a wonderful way to Worship together as a Congregation via phone or Internet. We have three Pods currently and will likely add a fourth Pod soon! **Each group virtually meets on Sunday mornings at 9:30.** We share in leading the service by taking turns doing the readings, reading the prayers together, listening to the beautiful music and watching Pastor Melody's sermon as a group. Each House Church Service averages about 40 minutes with the option for brief fellowship after.

If you would like to join a House Church Pod, just register online at Grace's Website or contact Becky Ficarella.

TUESDAY NIGHT HOUSE CHURCH BEGINS SEPTEMBER 8TH @ 7PM

Are Sunday mornings at 9:30am not a convenient time for you to worship? Come join Becky Ficarella for an Evening Worship opportunity on Tuesdays at 7pm. Please register on the Grace Website and indicate that you would like to be a part of the Tuesday Night House Church. You can always email Becky Ficarella directly too, bficarella@graceglenelly.org.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILY



Spark Preschool & Shine Elementary Virtual Faith Formation begins Sept. 20

So how will virtual Faith Formation work? Each week, a new lesson link will be uploaded to the Grace Website (I will email it to you as well!). The lesson may include a recorded video lesson from a familiar Grace face, a short animated video about the Bible lesson, a song, and a craft to help bring the teaching to life! Each family that wishes to participate in this will need to register on the Grace Website. The registration will ensure that we have your student included for craft supply porch drop offs. The plan is to porch drop off a bag of supplies once or twice this fall season to last your family through the end of January. (I will be on maternity leave mid-November through early January). Please reach out to me if you would like to help with porch drop offs. If you have friends looking for a new church home, share this opportunity with them! All children are welcome to join in the fun!

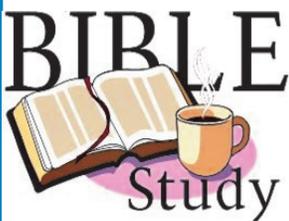
Virtual Confirmation Class begins on Wednesday, September 23 @ 7:30pm



Grace's Virtual Confirmation Class will begin on Wednesday, September 23 at 7:30pm. We will meet one hour bi-weekly on Wednesdays via the Zoom meeting application. This class is open to 6th, 7th, & 8th Grade students. The following dates will be our Fall Schedule. The Zoom link will be emailed to you.

September 23; October 7 & 21; November 4 & 18; December 2 & 16; January 20

We will reassess our virtual plan and shift to in person gathering when it is determined safe to do so! Confirmation instruction will also include attending the bi-weekly Gospel Study Zoom listed below.



High School and Confirmation Sunday Morning Gospel Study Zoom will continue into the Fall @ 11am

We have had great participation and success with our bi-weekly Sunday Morning Virtual Gospel Study with Dominic LoGalbo. This is open to all Middle and High School students to attend. The following schedule is through January. A zoom link will be emailed to you for participation.

September 13 & 27; October 11 & 25; November 8 & 22; December 6; January 10 & 24

This is a great group to invite a friend to join too! All are always welcome to join our study.

Grace Outdoor Fellowship Event Open to All on September 20

Come join your Grace Family for a social distance outdoor event at **St. James Farm in Warrenville on Sunday, September 20 @ 11:30am**. Bring your mask, a lawn chair, and maybe a small picnic too for yourself and your family. We will have a short sing a long (with masks) and an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors with our Grace Family. St. James Farm is located at 2S541 Winfield Rd, Warrenville, IL 60555. Friends are always welcome to join!

Women of Grace Virtual Zoom, 7pm Thursday, September 17

We will meet via Zoom for fellowship this month! Bring your beverage and snacks along with and join the other Women of Grace for online fun. The Zoom link will be posted in the Facebook Women of Grace group and will be sent out in an E-blast as well. Hope to see you there!

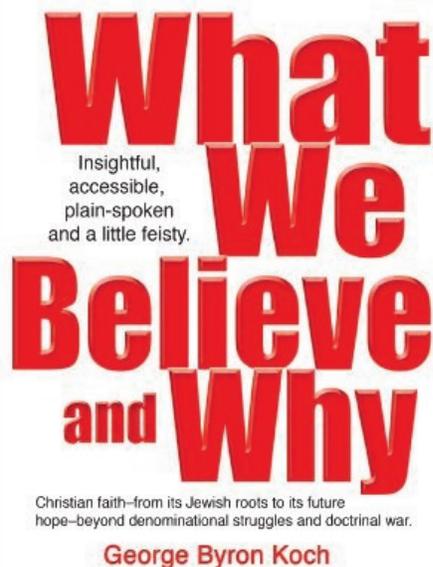
Peace Be Upon You Grace Family.
Becky Ficarella, Ministry Associate
bficarella@graceglenellyn.org

MONDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS ZOOM

Beginning on **September 14, 2020, 7:00pm**, we will study the book ***What We Believe and Why*** by the Rev. Dr. George Byron Koch. The author is local, pastor of New Jerusalem House of Prayer in West Chicago. He entered theological study after the study of physics and information technology. While dealing with theology, the book is written in plain language. The goal is for us to think rigorously, recognize the Jewish roots of Christianity, understand the teachings of various Christian denominations in a respectful way, and how to live and love as Jesus taught. The goal of the book is to both sharpen the Christian mind and strengthen the Christian heart.

We will start into the book and determine the correct pace for ourselves. The book has 24 chapters of uneven length. The early chapters must be taken slowly as they introduce the key concepts of the study. Most likely, we will meet online rather than in person until we are certain that it is safe to meet together in the church building.

The Monday night group has become cohesive over the years, sharing treats and conversation as well as our Bible study. Still, there is always room for more, and we will make you feel welcome. Contact Mark Hamilton at mark.hamilton@ifsworld.com or Vince Hardt at vvince2001@hotmail.com if you have not participated before and wish to join us now so that we can obtain a book for you.



A QUICK NOTE ON FINANCES FROM YOUR TREASURER



We understand that in today's world normal has taken on a new meaning with the pandemic causing financial and mental hardships for many individuals.

We at Grace are very grateful for the financial support given to us by the congregation. Looking at July and year-to-date giving we were on pace for a \$64,000 deficit. With the help of the \$56,227 forgivable loan from the federal government's PPP program we were able to temporarily stave off one of the church's largest deficits in years. The generosity of our community and the government have helped the church survive thus far, but looking to the future we could face financial challenges down the road.

If you are able to, please review your giving while keeping Grace in your mind and prayers. We understand the struggles our community is facing right now and hope with your help we can continue to be a pillar for our congregation and community in this long storm.

A big thanks to each you for your generosity in your giving and volunteering to make Grace Church an effective member in our community. You are in our thoughts and prayers. Joe Jacobo

WOMEN OF GRACE ZOOM, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17 AT 7:00PM

Do you miss going out for dinner and drinks as a group!? We would love to offer this from the comfort of your own home. Log into Zoom with the link that will be sent out via Grace's E-Blast (it will also be listed on our Women of Grace Facebook Group).

Bring your favorite beverage and snack and pull up to your computer or phone for some fun fellowship and catching up.

Contact Becky Ficarella with any questions.



SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 9/1 Mark & Pat Danly (41)
- 9/1 Bob & Patti Lewis (30)
- 9/4 Paul & JoAnn Griffin (60)
- 9/4 Andrew & Emily Milleville (9)
- 9/5 Pat & Colleen Derrico (5)
- 9/8 Jose & Kellie de Leon (13)
- 9/10 Andy & Judy Simon (27)
- 9/18 Keith & Laurie Danly (27)
- 9/24 Bruce & Nancy Lantz (37)
- 9/24 Russ & Margaret Schumaker (15)
- 9/25 Jon & Brenda Ciero (21)
- 9/29 Ray & Bette Dieter (59)
- 9/30 Tim & Jean Derrico (48)



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 9/2 Joan Frank | 9/22 Zach Nelson |
| 9/5 Kellie de Leon | 9/23 Bette Dieter |
| 9/5 Anna Long | 9/24 Matthew Langner |
| 9/6 Patti Lewis | 9/25 Rob Hutzler |
| 9/7 Jan Miller | 9/25 Sue Pagnoni |
| 9/16 Kristin Jokela | 9/25 Jim Sladek |
| 9/18 Scott Miller | 9/26 Tommy Langner |
| 9/19 Jessica Koors | 9/28 Raleigh Hamilton |
| 9/21 Joseph Murawski | 9/30 Jonathan Serritella |

**HOW TO WEAR FACE MASKS PROPERLY
GUIDANCE FROM MAYO CLINIC**



Cloth masks should have multiple layers, and should fit snugly to the face. Masks must be worn over both mouth and nose!

We have some spare masks available in adult and child sizes if you don't have one, or yours isn't adequate.

- Place your mask over your mouth and nose.
- Tie it behind your head or use ear loops and make sure it's snug.
- Don't touch your mask while wearing it.
- If you accidentally touch your mask, wash or sanitize your hands.
- Remove the mask by untying it or lifting off the ear loops without touching the front of the mask or your face.
- Wash your hands immediately after removing your mask.
- Regularly wash your mask with soap and water in the washing machine. It's fine to launder it with other clothes.

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GLEN ELLYN

West Conference - Metropolitan Chicago Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
493 Forest Avenue at Pennsylvania Avenue
Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137
Office: 630.469.1555
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www.graceglenellyn.org

Every Member: Minister & Missionary!

Melody Eastman, Pastor
Becky Ficarella, Ministry Associate
Carole LoGalbo, M.S., LCPC Parish Counselor
Barbara Sudds, Office Manager
Bradford Thompson, Minister of Music

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:30am - 3:00pm
Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 - 3:00pm

PRAYER REQUESTS

Dorothy Tracy, Sigrid Elliott, Chris Danly, and those infected with the Covid-19 virus for healing and strength.

Birthday wishes to Joan Frank (9/2) and Anna Long (9/5) on their 85th birthday.

Anniversary wishes to Paul & JoAnn Griffin, 60 years on 9/4; and Ray & Bette Dieter, 59 years on 9/29.

Family and friends of Bob Clauss for comfort in grief.

Prayers for our Homebound Members:

Anita Blakemore, Evelyn Elson, Carol Peterson, Norma Petersen, Dorothy Stein

NOSES AND NUMBERS

DATE	ATTENDANCE		OFFERING
	SUNDAY	WEDNESDAY	
7/5	xx	xx	\$ 2,320
7/12	xx	xx	\$ 9,125
7/19 & 26	xx	xx	\$ 5,810

Grace's income, minus the PPP Gov't Aid, through July 2020 is \$205,674 while expenses incurred during the same period are \$263,816.